

Thank you very much. My name is Larry Bean. I'm from Billings, Montana, and I'm here with the Northern Plains Resource Council. I'd like to thank you for your efforts to this point in time with the listening session and the results that it brought in bringing this scoping session into being. As I read through the results, there was one issue that struck me as maybe needing a little more attention, and personally, I would like to see a more robust investigation in a final statement. And that is the issue of reclamation. Right now, it appears that, even with certain accolades for having done some reclamation, overall there's only 14 percent that's actually been reclaimed. So the disturbances far outweigh the actual reclamation work. In addition to that, just in my own personal conversations, I'm very hard-pressed to find anyone who really truly believes that everything is going to be reclaimed. In fact, most people think it's going end up being back on the taxpayers, and if nothing else, just the perception that this isn't really being handled well is, in fact, a deficit. Therefore, I think it's necessary to make every effort just to improve the perception of what's going on in terms of reclamation. I'd like to suggest a couple of things. First, new leasing should not be allowed until there's catch-up on the existing reclamation needed. This may sound like a drastic idea, but there are 20 years left in the ground to mine, and it's a good opportunity to hire a lot of good-paying jobs in reclaiming that resource. The bonding requirements should be reviewed to ensure there's adequate funds. The very concept of self-bonding provides absolutely no confidence to the public that the reclamation will actually be completed. Schedule bond releases to be set up so that there's always plenty of financial incentive to pursue reclamation to the very end. There should also be a requirement that reclamation planning begin in earnest at the time of the lease and even designs of the extraction be considered in a way that reclamation can begin as soon as any portion of the lease is completed, not waiting for the whole lease to complete and then start a phase. I would just like to point out that we do know coal is declining, and the idea that, if there's some issue that comes up that comes back on the taxpayers to pay for, it seems kind of like adding insult to injury to say, "We're going to have to pay for that, that oversight that was missed," when that money could have just as easily been spent on planning for

other things; for example, finding exactly how coal country is going to find its place in a diversified energy future. Thank you.